Claims

We claim:

1. A physiologically-acceptable agent, adapted to deliver a nucleic acid to a cell, comprising inorganic particles to which are bound a cell-binding component and the nucleic acid.

2. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are of a biodegradable metal oxide or a salt.

3. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles have a polymeric coating.

4. The agent according to claim 2, wherein the particles have a polymeric coating.

5. The agent according to claim 3, wherein the coating is biodegradable.

6. The agent according to claim 4, wherein the coating is biodegradable.

7. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are from about 5 nm to about 100 nm in size.

8. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are magnetisable.

9. The agent according to claim 1, which additionally comprises a nuclease inhibitor.

10. The agent according to claim 9, wherein the inhibitor is Group 3 ion.

11. The agent according to claim 1, which additionally comprises a nucleic acid-binding protein and the nucleic acid comprises a segment having affinity for that protein.

12. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the nucleic acid is bound via a complementary sequence linked to the particles.

13. The agent according to claim 1, wherein the particles are homogeneous and/or substantially free of water-soluble material.

14. The agent according to claim 1, for use in therapy.

15. An injectable composition comprising an agent according to claim 1 and a physiologically-acceptable diluent.

16. A physiologically-acceptable vector comprising the coated particles and bound cell-binding component, but not the nucleic acid, as defined in claim 1.

17. A method for the treatment of a patient using gene therapy, said method comprising administering an effective amount of an agent of claim 1 to the patient.